

BOOK REVIEWS

The journal does not review all books sent by the publishers. New books received are listed in the Advertising Section. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

NUTRITION AND MEDICAL PRACTICE—Edited by Lewis A. Barnes, MD, Professor and Chairman, Department of Pediatrics, University of South Florida College of Medicine; with Yank D. Coble, Jr, MD, Specialist in Endocrinology and Nutrition, Jacksonville, FL; Donald I. MacDonald, MD, Pediatrician, Clearwater, FL; and George Christakis, MD, MPH, Chief, Nutrition Div., Dept. of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Miami School of Medicine. AVI Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 831, Westport, CT 06881, 1981. 408 pages, \$17.00, USA and Canada; other countries, \$19.50.

The importance of nutrition education in the training of medical students and physicians has been a subject of major scientific, social and political discussion for at least the past two decades. The debate has focused on the failure of health professionals to appreciate properly the role of nutrition in the prevention, etiology and treatment of disease. Meanwhile, the public is deluged with dietary advice from nonmedical sources: books, health food stores, the media and nutrition practitioners of varying credentials and credibility. Much of the information provided by these sources is contradictory. Not all of it is accurate or based soundly on the results of well-controlled clinical studies.

Patients expect their doctors to evaluate this information and to provide reasonable explanations for why they should—or should not—take vitamins, eat eggs or drink coffee. Physicians need to be able to answer such questions, to counsel patients on the diet appropriate for their age group, to prescribe therapeutic diets for common disorders, to recognize and treat malnutrition among patients in hospital, and to know how and when to refer patients to a dietitian or nutritionist. Physicians who are comfortably familiar with basic nutritional principles and current research in nutrition are better able to deal with these issues in a manner that enhances communication and effectiveness with patients.

To meet the need for increased training in nutrition for its members, the Florida Medical Association adopted Nutrition as its scientific theme during 1978-79 and it devoted the April 1979 issue of its journal to this field. Now, the 29 papers published in that special issue, updated slightly, have been collected together with four additional articles to make up *Nutrition and Medical Practice*.

According to its foreword, this volume "will contribute greatly to the education of physicians, medical students and the knowledgeable public alike. It should serve as a valid reference source for many years to come." Unfortunately, it is only partially successful in realizing this objective.

The strength of this book lies in the extraordinary diversity of the topics it covers and in the high quality of several of its chapters. The 33 articles contributed by 38 authors—many of them internationally known experts—cover an exceedingly wide range of topics in clinical nutrition. Chapters discuss nutritional assessment in children and adults; the special nutritional needs of infants and pregnant women; dietary factors in the treatment of disorders such as diabetes, obesity, dental caries, hyperactivity and renal disease; nutritional support and intervention programs, and the role of dietitians in office practice. Additional articles cover drug-nutrient interactions, food additives, megavitamin therapy, Recommended Dietary Allowances, food selection methods, and

the historical role of agriculture and public health departments in nutritional support programs. Finally, the book provides a list of nutrition references for practitioners and patients, a nutrition quiz, and Appendix tables of food composition, infant and child height and weight standards, and ideal body weights for adults.

Many of these chapters and appendices provide information that should interest and benefit health professionals. The article on home management of nutrition for patients undergoing cancer therapy provides a brief but comprehensive discussion of the factors that influence food intake and utilization in cancer patients and the various forms of nutritional support that are available to address nutritional problems. An excellent chapter reviews methods for evaluating nutritional status, calculating dietary requirements and administering total parenteral nutrition to malnourished patients in hospital. The section on dental disease presents a balanced discussion of the controversies over dietary factors in causation and treatment of caries and periodontal disease.

Other worthwhile chapters review nutritional issues in juvenile diabetes (family cooperation is critical to the success of any diet plan), obesity (some methods to treat it are safer and more successful than others) and federal food assistance programs (in spite of their demonstrated effectiveness, the future of these programs depends entirely on budgetary considerations).

Although these and other chapters are interesting and useful, the book suffers as a whole from many problems that preclude its use as a reference source. As might be expected from a compilation of papers by many different authors, *Nutrition and Medical Practice* lacks a coherent overview of the role of nutrition in clinical practice. The chapters appear in apparently random order. The paper on nutrition in childhood diabetes is followed immediately by a history of the relationship of agriculture to medicine, and then by a discussion of how the Recommended Dietary Allowances were established which, in turn, is followed by a chapter on diet-drug interactions.

The book is repetitious, yet incomplete. The Recommended Dietary Allowances and US Dietary Goals are each presented in their entirety in two different chapters. No article reviews the evidence that relates diet to coronary heart disease, although one chapter is devoted to a discussion of the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial. The reference chapter fails to list either of the two major clinical nutrition textbooks designed specifically for physicians.

Apparently the authors received little, if any, editorial assistance from the publishers. Chapter bibliographies lack consistent style and sometimes even omit important details. I found at least one instance each of an incomplete and an incorrect reference (chapter 4), incorrect spelling of an author's name (chapter 7) and a text reference number that does not refer to the correct journal article (chapter 14).

A more serious flaw is the inadequate index. It appears that only chapter titles and subheadings (and by no means all of them at that) are listed. There is no index listing for protein-calorie malnutrition, marasmus or kwashiorkor, although these terms are defined and

BOOK REVIEWS

discussed in two separate chapters. Neither of the two complete summaries of the US Dietary Goals is listed in the index. There is no listing for aging or geriatrics even though special issues pertaining to the nutritional status of the elderly are addressed in the chapter on drug-diet interactions and in the one on food assistance programs. These omissions prevent the use of this volume as a reference text.

Finally, the 30 nutrition quiz questions will not encourage the National Board of Medical Examiners to require nutrition information as a condition for licensing of physicians. Such questions as "An average supermarket contains the following number of different food items from which the housewife must choose to build a nutritious diet for her family: (a) 1,000, (b) 500, (c) 5,000, (d) 15,000, (e) none of the above" (answer: c), and "Which of the following does not represent a good buy nutritionally for a low-income family: (a) loaf of bread (whole wheat or white), (b) skim milk powder, (c) protein-enriched spaghetti, (d) peanut butter, (e) lettuce" (answer: e) make nutritional science seem trivial and do not reinforce the very great importance of nutrition knowledge to the prevention and treatment of disease.

With a more comprehensive overview, better organization and more attention to editorial detail, *Nutrition and Medical Practice* could have made a useful contribution to the nutrition instruction of health professionals.

MARION NESTLE, PhD
Associate Dean, School of Medicine and
Lecturer in Medicine and Biochemistry
University of California, San Francisco

* * *

THE 1980 YEAR BOOK OF FAMILY PRACTICE—Editor: Robert E. Rakel, MD, Professor and Head, Department of Family Practice, University of Iowa College of Medicine; Associate Editors: Forrest Dean, MD; Charles E. Driscoll, MD; Charles W. Smith, MD, and James L. Wilson, MD. Year Book Medical Publishers, 35 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL (60601), 1980. 453 pages, \$32.95.

Most physicians are familiar with the current year book series which has grown to cover 23 medical disciplines.

The Year Books call attention to the problem of getting medical manuscripts into print in a punctual fashion. This *1980 Year Book of Family Practice* has a 1980 imprint, but the authors state that literature review stopped in July 1979. A year is about as fast as a physician can come to obtaining prompt information in book form. The alternative would be for the physician to do his own journal searches.

The 400 articles for the 1980 edition were selected from 100 national and foreign journals after the editors reviewed 20,000 articles. The editors have divided the contents into 18 sections ranging from Infectious Diseases to Family Problems.

Year books are not the type of books that physicians sit down to read; this one is no different. Ordinarily, the books are used as reference work. The editors appear to recognize this use by preparing an excellent 15-page index as well as an authors' index. This helps make the book a useful reference tool.

In addition, the editors offer a current literature quiz based on information presented in the book. The questions are numbered and a physician can find the answers by selecting the proper page number from a table in the back of the book. I suspect this is an effort to make *The Year Book of Family Practice* an educational experience. It is a good idea, but I suspect most readers will pass up that exercise in continuing medical education.

Coming from university departments of family practice where obstetrics is given short shrift, a family physician

might be surprised to find that the editors have chosen 13 articles covering 17 pages on obstetrics. This inclusion speaks well for the editors' concept of family medicine.

But in contrast, there is no section on surgery. Surgical treatment is only incidentally mentioned in the other 18 sections. For instance, on pages 332 and 333 in the section on dermatology, articles on electrosurgery of skin lesions and the surgical treatments of ingrown toenails are found. At the same time, Dr. Rakel, the book's editor, devotes 86 pages to basic medical problems of the circulatory and respiratory systems. Consequently, this book is of little help to a family physician involved in the surgical treatment of his patients' diseases.

But, all in all, *The Year Book of Family Practice* serves a useful purpose. Every modern family physician should buy and use this book.

WILFRED SNODGRASS, MD†
Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicine,
Family Practice
UCLA School of Medicine;
Associate Director
Family Practice Residency Program
Santa Monica Hospital Medical Center
Santa Monica, California

* * *

CLINICAL ARTHROGRAPHY—Rolf D. Arndt, MD, Radiologist, St. John's Hospital and Health Center, Santa Monica, Assistant Clinical Professor of Radiology, University of California, Los Angeles; John W. Horns, MD, Radiologist, St. John's Hospital and Health Center, Santa Monica, Assistant Clinical Professor of Radiology, University of California, Los Angeles; Richard H. Gold, MD, Professor of Radiology, Chief of Skeletal Radiology, University of California, Los Angeles; with a special contribution on temporomandibular joint arthrography by Donald D. Blaschke, DDS, Assistant Professor, Section of Oral Radiology, University of California, Los Angeles, School of Dentistry. Williams & Wilkins Company, 428 E. Preston St., Baltimore (21202), 1981. 212 pages, \$30.00.

This small textbook by four authors offers concise information on arthrography of the knee, shoulder, hip, elbow, ankle, wrist, hand joints and temporal mandibular joint. Despite the multiple authors there is a uniformity of style and text arrangement throughout the book. Each chapter begins with a brief description of the usual clinical indications, followed by the normal anatomy, the method of arthrography, the normal arthrogram and the abnormal arthrogram. Each of the chapters offers a complete description of the normal radiographic anatomy and the usual abnormalities that can be detected.

The text is easy to read and the illustrations usually are close to the related text pages. A few of the authors' techniques differ from the practices used by others. For instance, double contrast arthrography of the knee and the shoulder is performed in two separate stages requiring two separate needle punctures. In addition, the authors remove the air from the knee joint at the end of the procedure, necessitating a third joint puncture. Arthrography of the wrist is described as being performed in a sitting position. Elbow arthrography is recommended either sitting or lying down. Other arthrographers have observed that a significant number of patients will experience a vagal reaction and faint if the procedure is done sitting up. The majority of the illustrations are clear, but the sections on knee arthrography and ankle arthrography contain some images that are too dark, have too much contrast or are too small for clear interpretation.

This textbook will be a useful tool in the average radiology department. Its low price will make it very competitive with other more expensive textbooks on the market. The book is aimed at radiologists who perform and interpret arthrograms. The text would be of secondary interest to orthopedic surgeons, and possibly

†Dr. Snodgrass died Nov. 6, 1981.